

Opportunities for Whole Care When Patients Present for Immunization

Children Population of Focus Implementation Guide

Guidance For Key Activity 16

Offer Nonpractice-Based Access to Immunizations

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One of the important changes to the American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures Guidelines was to include an annual exam for all children after age 3 years, which includes adolescents and emerging adults. In addition, FQHCs will be reimbursed for annual school, sport or camp physicals. Why is this important?

Many youth choose to forego this important health check-in and opt for vaccine clinics and urgent care. These young adults miss an important opportunity for social-emotional screening, which has never been more important since the rate of depression and suicidality in young people has skyrocketed.¹

While taking advantage of every opportunity to offer easy access to immunizations is important for clinics, if a child or youth has a gap in their care, they should not participate in mass vaccine opportunities offered by that clinic without being encouraged to be seen for their annual exam. Missing screening opportunities for depression, anxiety, suicidality, drug and alcohol use, and abuse may be life-threatening while providing these screenings can lead to overall better health in the future.

Sources:

¹ Suicide Across the Board: Risk Factors, Assessment, and Interventions in Adults APA Annual Meeting 2024 Douglas Jacobs, MD Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Part-time, Harvard Medical School Co-director, Stanford Suicide Course, October 30, 2024.

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db362.htm#:~:text=Data%20from%20the%20National%20Vital,year%20from%202006%20through%202018>